

**MMC 2604: Media, Cultures, and Identity
Spring 2024 Syllabus**

Instructor: Dr. Celeste Wagner

Office: Weimer #3115

Email: wagner.m@ufl.edu (add MMC 2604 to email subject)

Class Time:

Tuesday 4:05 PM - 4:55 PM

Thursday 4:05 PM - 6:00 PM

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:45 – 3:45 PM and 5:05 – 6 PM, Thursday 2:45 – 3:45 PM. Sign up required at <https://calendly.com/celeste-wagner/office-hours>

Course Description

This course will examine social scientific theories in mass communication and media studies scholarship to analyze how the media represents various groups, identities, and issues, and how these representations can shape audience attitudes and behaviors. We will analyze media representation of issues related to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, racialization, class, nationality, culture, religion, and ability from a global perspective. These issues will be examined in a variety of media contexts, including journalism, entertainment, advertising, and sports, with a focus on both traditional and digital media. Students will apply concepts and theories to analyze contemporary media examples of their choice in group class activities and in individual assignments.

Course Learning Goals

By the end of the semester, you will learn:

- To use theoretical concepts for analyzing media representations of different groups and social and political issues.
- To develop analytical skills that foster cultural sensitivity and responsible media consumption and practice, considering market dynamics and audience demographics.
- To understand social scientific findings on the impact of media representations on public and individual opinions, sentiments, and behaviors.
- To engage in reflective thinking about ethical issues in the media's portrayal of societal issues.

Class Values & Good Practices

The University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications Department of Journalism is committed to fostering an intellectual community enriched by plurality along several dimensions.

It is important that together we create an inclusive learning environment where everyone feels comfortable and welcome. Many times, learning something new entails feeling uncomfortable and challenging preconceived ideas. This is a desired outcome of any learning environment because it encourages us to think with rigor, fairness, and creativity.

The goal is never to agree on issues or find consensus as a class, but to educate ourselves rigorously and respectfully, adhering to the principles of social scientific knowledge. I expect everyone to civilly engage in discussions about different topics. Thus, curiosity and respect for different viewpoints and experiences are essential not only for success in this class but also for

personal and intellectual growth. For this, it is essential that we all exercise respect, courtesy, civil dialogue, and empathy towards one another.

Remember that many of the readings, documentaries, examples, etc., in the syllabus were created by specific individuals with their own viewpoints. I would like for everyone to feel comfortable sharing your observations and critiques about the material. As a matter of fact, your ability to analyze those aspects is a goal of the class.

Please, feel free to reach out to me if there is anything you want to share about this or if you have any suggestions on new topics or on how to build this communal space for all of us to learn together. I am eager to collaborate with all of you in achieving these goals.

Course Requirements

Course Materials:

- Most of the required material will be available through Canvas, either linked or attached as a PDF.
- There will be one **required textbook**, cited below. There is a physical copy available on reserve at the library (2 hours + overnight).
 - **Len-Ríos, M. E., & Perry, E. L. (Eds.). (2019). Cross-cultural journalism and strategic communication (Second Edition). Routledge.**
- To be able to access the material through the provided links, you will have to be connected to UF Wi-Fi or the UF network via our **VPN** software if you are off campus. Refer to this [video instruction about how to connect to the VPN](#).
- We will be using a combination of **textbook chapters, academic journal articles, book chapters, and nonacademic sources** (news articles, videos, documentaries, etc.).
- Students must **complete assigned readings/materials prior to the class** in which they are discussed and be prepared to participate in individual/group discussion/activities.
- Readings that are more difficult and are expected to take more time to finish will be marked in the syllabus with the following: **(!)**
- For classes in which the reading material is conceptually more challenging, I will provide **reading guides** in advance to help you identify what is relevant for this class and ignore what is not.
- When there is more than one reading per class, I encourage you to **read/watch the material in the order that it is listed**.
- Some of the material is likely to change during the semester. Please refer to Canvas every week to see what's required for the following week.

Before Class Assignments:

- Before most classes, students will have to engage in a **short individual assignment** related to the class materials of that week.
- Assignments are due at noon the day of each class.
- Each one of these short activities will be specified on Canvas at least 1 week before the class.

In-Class Activities / Class Participation:

- In this course, we will apply "[active learning](#)" in-class activities.
- Students should come to class having read/listened/watched all class material for that class and be prepared to engage in individual or group activities.

- Students do not know in advance when in-class activities will take place, but they are likely to happen every other class/week.
- Participation in these activities will be graded and attendance will be taken.
- Missing in-class activities:
 - For any missed in-class activity, students will get a 0.
 - Students will obtain an "Excuse" on Canvas for a missed in-class activity if they email me an official medical note or other proof of a justified absence, including religious holidays. Please, always review [UF attendance policies](#).
 - Students are allowed to miss 1 class due to a non-medical reason a semester and receive an "Excuse" on Canvas. This is your personal emergency absence. Think of it as a day in which you have to unexpectedly travel back home, need to take your pet to the vet, need a mental health day, are traveling to visit friends/family, need to care for a relative, have to participate in a non-UF activity, etc. You only have 1 personal absence a semester, so manage it properly.
- Students are responsible for keeping track of their absences on Canvas.
- In-class activities are only done in class and cannot be done afterward under any circumstance.

Group presentation:

- During Part II of the class, groups will be in charge of leading an in-class group activity (100 points total). The goal of in-class group activities is to apply concepts learned in class to to real world media analysis. Instead of leading a presentation of the topics of the week, groups will have to design an original and engaging yet rigorous and academic in-class group activity for the rest of their classmates. The goal of the activity is to assess their classmates' knowledge of the concepts learned that week, as well as their creativity applying them. Activities can be entertaining and creative as long as they are respectful of everyone, and they seriously engage with the class materials.
- The leading group will be assessed based on:
 - **Group's understanding of the content** (e.g., How does the leading group explain the key concepts? Does the activity focus on key concepts from the class materials?) (30 points)
 - **Assignment's ability to assess knowledge** (e.g., Is this a good activity to test whether the rest of the class has understood the concepts? Is this a good activity to apply the concepts to real world events?) (20 points)
 - **Originality of the activity** (e.g., Is it engaging? Are other classmates actively participating? Is the activity creative? Does the activity assess knowledge in an innovative and applied way?) This is often the most difficult aspect! (20 points)
 - **Organization and presentation** (e.g., Are the assignment prompts clear and clearly explained? How is the time management? Are all members of the leading group actively involved in the delivery of comments, feedback and explanations? How are the public speaking skills of the group members?) (30 points)
- While I will be the one grading the rest of the class' participation grade, the group in charge has to design an activity that allows their classmates to be graded in groups.
- Students will be able to select their own groups and, as a group, suggest a first and a second option of their preferred weeks.
- Groups should estimate that their designed activity should take around 45-50 minutes of class time total.
- Activities that have some form of oral presentation are preferred, as they allow for more engagement and interaction between classmates.

- All group members should be present during the class in which they lead the activity, unless any of the above-mentioned circumstances occur (see “Missing in-class activities”).
- Groups should summarize over email (wagner.m@ufl.edu) or during office hours the activity at least one week before the class. I will give the group feedback to improve the activity. The summary of the activity should explicitly state the role of each group member.
- At least 2 days before the class, students should send me over email the description and/or reviewed materials of the activity that should be posted on Canvas so that their classmates can access them.
- While every member of the group will receive the same grade, I will give individual grades if a group member is not an active participant.

Exam:

- There will be **one multiple choice, in-class exam** in the middle of the semester to test students’ knowledge of the subject’s foundations (Part I of the syllabus).
- Students that require accommodations should reach out to me early on in the semester. See information about the Disability Resource Center below.
- Students must take the exam on the set date except for proof of illness, etc.

Final Essay

- There will be one **short final essay** focused on the application of concepts to specific issues (Part II of the syllabus).
- Students will have to show their abilities applying the theoretical and analytical foundations to specific media examples. They will receive guidelines on how to write the essay.
- Late submissions will get a percentage daily deduction. More information on this and on the essay guidelines will be provided separately.

Assessment

- **Before class assignments:** 20%
- **In-class activities:** 20%
- **Group class presentation:** 15%
- **Exam:** 20% total
- **Short essay:** 25%

Important Dates & Deadlines

Exam: Tuesday, February 13
 Final essay: Tuesday, April 23

Grading Scale

Letter grade	Percent	Letter grade	Percent	Letter grade	Percent	Letter grade	Percent
		B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%
A	100-94%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	63-66%
A-	90-93%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	D-	60-62%

Scores are rounded to the nearest whole point. For example, 89.4% rounds down to 89%, 89.5% rounds up to 90%. We will stick to this rule even when this has an impact on the letter grade you obtain. Students can also review [UF grades and grading policies](#).

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the class, you will have to complete a course evaluation online via GatorEvals. Course evaluations are very important, as they will help me plan and adjust the syllabus for next iterations of this class. They are also important for future students who will indirectly benefit from your feedback. It is expected that students will offer professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. [Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or [online](#). [Summaries of course evaluation results](#) are available to students online.

Students Honor Code

All students have to respect the [UF student honor code and conduct code](#). Students cannot turn in work that is not their own, including work generated by Chat GPT and other AI programs. If students have questions or concerns about how to approach submissions or how to use artificial intelligence appropriately, they are encouraged to come to office hours.

Reach Out

Please, if you are finding any difficulties or challenges in this class, don't hesitate to talk to me. You can sign up for office hours, email me, or just knock on my door 😊

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

(subject to change; always refer to Canvas modules)

PART 1: ANALYTICAL FOUNDATIONS

Unit 1: Introduction + Publics

Class 1: Tuesday, January 9

- **Content:** General introduction to the course (and to each other)
- **Readings/materials:** Close reading of the syllabus
- **Before class:** Read the syllabus in detail + Complete survey “Getting to know each other” on Canvas
- **In-class activity:** Media recommendations game + collective definition of class “rules”

Class 2: Thursday, January 11

- **Content:** Contemporary audience practices
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2023 \(pp. 9-29\)](#)
 - [“Social Media and News Fact Sheet,” Pew Research Center Report \(September 20, 2022\)](#)
 - *Pay special attention to correctly reading the infographics*
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the readings
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 3: Tuesday, January 16

- **Content:** Excellence in journalism
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Perry, E. L. & Len-Ríos, M. E. “Chapter 1: Conceptual Understanding” in Len-Ríos & Perry.
 - [Darryl Holliday. “Journalism is a public good. Let the public make it”, Columbia Journalism Review \(December 15, 2021\)](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Unit 2: Difference and Representation

Class 4: Thursday, January 18

- **Content:** Communicating across difference + Human rights
- **Readings/material:**
 - Woods, K. M. “Chapter 2: Talking across difference” in Len-Ríos & Perry
 - [“What are the Basic Human Rights?” Ted-Ed video](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class:** TBD

Class 5: Tuesday, January 23

- **Content:** The importance and impact of representation on the self and on society
- **Readings:**

- Alhabash, S., Cunningham, C. & Kononova, A. "Chapter 3: Who is American?" in Len-Ríos & Perry
- (!) [Leavitt, P. A., Covarrubias, R., Perez, Y. A., & Fryberg, S. A. \(2015\). "Frozen in time": The impact of Native American media representations on identity and self-understanding. *Journal of Social Issues*, 71\(1\), 39-53.](#)
 - Reading guide provided
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class:** TBD

Unit 3: Cultural Hybridity

Class 6: Thursday, January 25

- **Content:** Thinking intersectionally about social difference
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Watch this video on Youtube](#)
 - [Watch this video on YouTube](#)
 - [TIME Magazine article \(February 20, 2020\)](#)
 - ["In northern Argentina, gendered violence and discrimination leave their mark on Indigenous communities", *The New Humanitarian*](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the materials
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 7: Tuesday, January 30

- **Content:** Hybridity as a conceptual lens to think of social difference + context of globalization
- **Readings/materials:**
 - (!) [Barker, C. \(1997\). Television and the reflexive project of the self: soaps, teenage talk and hybrid identities. *British Journal of Sociology*, 611-628.](#)
 - ["Globalization Isn't Dead, It's Just Not American Anymore", *The Washington Post*](#)
 - Reading guide provided
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Unit 4: Mass Media Theories

Class 8: Thursday, February 1

- **Content:** Overview of theories that study how the media impacts society: Agenda setting
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Sparks, G. G. \(2006\). "Agenda-setting theory," "Framing the news." In "Chapter 9: The effects of news and political content." In *Media effects research. A basic overview*, 2.](#)
 - Watch [interview to McCombs on agenda setting theory](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 9: Tuesday, February 6

- **Content:** Overview of theories that study how the media impacts society: Frame analysis and framing

- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Baran, S., & Davis, D. \(2015\). "Framing and frame analysis", "The development of theories of frames and framing", "Effects of frames on news audiences", pp. 316-327 in Section 2, Chapter 10. In *Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment, and future*. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Unit 5: Global and International Standpoint

Class 10: Thursday, February 8

- **Content:** The representation of "the rest of the world"
- **Readings/materials:**
 - (!) [Hall, S. \(1992\). "The West and the rest: Discourse and power," in *Essential Essays: Identity and Diaspora \(Vol. 2\)* \(Links to an external site.\) \[Only pages: 141-148; 164-171. This accounts for the following sections: "Introduction" until the end of "Five Main Phases"; and from "Idealization" to the end of "Summary: Stereotypes, Dualism and 'Splitting'\]](#)
 - **Reading guide provided**
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the materials + reading guide
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Class 11: Tuesday, February 13 - EXAM (content: class 2 – class 10)

PART 2: APPLYING KNOWLEDGE TO SPECIFIC ISSUES

Unit 6: Ideology and Politics

Class 12: Thursday, February 15

- **Content:** Polarization and misinformation
- **Readings/materials:**
 - ["Americans' main sources for political news vary by party and age," Pew Research Center 2020 report](#)
 - Watch [short video on Affective Polarization](#) by Prof. Lelkes
 - [Tandoc Jr, E. C., Lim, D., & Ling, R. \(2020\). Diffusion of disinformation: How social media users in Singapore respond to fake news and why. *Journalism*, 21\(3\), 381-398](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** Student-led group activity #1

Class 13: Tuesday, February 20

- **Content:** Framing of political protests
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Brown, D. \(January 16, 2020\). "What do we want? Unbiased reporting! When do we want it? During protests!", *The Conversation*.](#)
 - [Mourão, R. R. \(2019\). From mass to elite protests: News coverage and the evolution of antigovernment demonstrations in Brazil. *Mass Communication and Society*, 22\(1\), 49-71.](#)

- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Unit 7: Social Class

Class 14: Thursday, February 22

- **Content:** Media representation of social class
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Thomas, R. J. and Hendricks, M. A. "Chapter 4: Making Class Matter: Journalism and Social Class" in Len-Ríos & Perry.
 - [Watch documentary "Class Dismissed: How TV Frames the Working Class" on Kanopy](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class materials
- **In-class activity:** Student-led group activity #2

Class 15: Tuesday, February 27

- **Content:** Media representation of social class
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Kendall. Chapter 5. Framing Class: Media Representations of Wealth and Poverty in America. \[pages 8-34\]](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class materials
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Unit 8: Gender

Class 16: Thursday, February 29

- **Content:** Gender in the industry: news and marketing
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Volz, Y. & Len-Ríos. "Chapter 5: Gender and the Media: Envisioning Equality" in Len-Ríos & Perry. [Only pages 101-116]
 - [Watch "Gender Marketing" video on YouTube](#)
 - [Mitchelstein, E., Andelsman, V., & Boczkowski, P. J. \(2019\). Joanne Public vs. Joe Public: news sourcing and gender imbalance on Argentine digital media. *Digital Journalism*, 7\(10\), 1311-1327](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** Student-led group activity #3

Class 17: Tuesday, March 5

- **Content:** The construction and representation of gender
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Watch the [documentary "The Codes of Gender"](#) (abridged version) by Sut Jhally
 - [Marshall, K., Chamberlain, K., & Hodgetts, D. \(2020\). Male bodybuilders on Instagram: Negotiating inclusive masculinities through hegemonic masculine bodies. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 29\(5\), 570-589.](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the readings.
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Unit 9: Body image

Class 18: Thursday, March 7

- **Content:** Media effects on body image
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Burnell, K., Kurup, A. R., & Underwood, M. K. \(2022\). Snapchat lenses and body image concerns. *New Media & Society*, 24\(9\), 2088-2106.](#) [You can skip statistics heavy sections]
 - Watch the documentary “Missrepresentation” [TBD]
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** Student-led group activity #4

No classes on March 12 and 14 – Spring Break!

Class 19: Tuesday, March 19

- **Content:** Buffering negative effects of social media use on body image
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Mahon, C., & Hevey, D. \(2021\). Processing body image on social media: Gender differences in adolescent boys’ and girls’ agency and active coping. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 626763.](#)
 - [Cohen, R., Slater, A., & Fardouly, J. \(March 17, 2019\) “Women can build positive body image by controlling what they view on social media,” *The Conversation*](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Unit 10: Race & Ethnicity

Class 20: Thursday, March 21

- **Content:** Industry aspects + the representation of race/ethnicity
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Mastro, Dana. Effects of Racial and Ethnic Stereotyping.](#) [Pp. 325-329 (from the beginning until the end of "Native Americans") + pp. 332-337 (from "Effects of media on racial..." until the end)]
 - [“Hollywood Report 2020: A Tale of Two Holywoods,” *UCLA*](#) [Skim through main findings and figures in pages 1-23]
 - [Watch “Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People” Documentary on *Kanopy*](#) [You need to be logged in to the VPN]
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** Student-led group activity #5

Class 21: Tuesday, March 26

- **Content:** The representation of race and ethnicity
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [“Lack of Asian representation in media shows through in recent blunders”, *The Baltimore Sun*](#)
 - [“Racism in football: new research shows media treats black men differently to white men”, *The Conversation*](#)

- Watch "[Latinos Beyond Reel: Challenging a Media Stereotype \(Abridged Version\)](#)" on Kanopy [You need to be logged in to the VPN]
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment.
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Unit 11: Nation and Immigration

Class 22: Thursday, March 28

- **Content:** The representation of immigration and the boundaries of citizenship
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Garza, M. M. "Chapter 9: Immigrants and Immigration: Reporting the New America," in Len-Ríos & Perry.
 - [Watch "Why Americans Love/Hated the Irish? Video](#)
 - [Watch "History Professor: Southern Italians Used to Be Treated the Same as Central Americans" Video](#)
 - [Watch "Ugly History: Japanese American incarceration camps" Video](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** Student-led group activity #6

Class 23: Tuesday, April 2

- **Content:** The representation of immigration and the boundaries of citizenship
- **Readings/materials:**
 - (!) [Figueroa-Caballero & Mastro. "Examining the effects of news coverage linking undocumented immigrants with criminality: Policy and punitive implications."](#)
 - **Reading guide provided**
 - [Watch "What does it mean to be a refugee?" TED-ED video](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on readings
- **In-class activity:**
 - Workshop – how to write a good essay

Final essay guidelines are posted

Unit 12: Sexuality

Class 24: Thursday, April 4

- **Content:** The representation of LGBTQ+ communities and rights in the media
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Hicks, G. R. "Chapter 6: Mass media and the LGBT community" in Len-Ríos and Perry.
 - [Moscowitz, L. M., Billings, A. C., Ejaz, K., & O'Boyle, J. \(2019\). Outside the sports closet: News discourses of professional gay male athletes in the mainstream. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 43\(3\), 249-271.](#)
 - [Watch the "Further Off the Straight and Narrow" Documentary.](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment
- **In-class activity:** Student-led group activity #7

Unit 13: Religion

Class 25: Tuesday, April 9

- **Content:** The representation of religion in the media
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Mason, D. L. "Religion in mass media markets and news," in Len-Ríos and Perry.
 - Read the report "Missing & Maligned: The Reality of Muslims in Popular Global Movies" <https://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/aii-muslim-rep-global-film-2021-06-09.pdf> [Focus on the main findings and figures.]
 - ["Does the Media Portray Evangelicals Fairly?"](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the readings.
- **In-class activity:** TBD

Unit 13: Disability

Class 26: Thursday, April 11

- **Content:** The representation of disability in the media
- **Readings/materials:**
 - Painter, C. "Chapter 11: The complexity of disability," in Len-Ríos & Perry.
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class material.
- **In-class activity:** Student-led group activity #8 (religion)

Class 27: Tuesday, April 16

- **Content:** Thinking of trauma through a lens of disability
- **Readings/materials:**
 - [Rajabi's TEDx talk "Trauma Unmakes the World" on YouTube](#)
 - [Rajabi, S. \(2019\). Living with Herbert: Mediating Survival and Resilience. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 8\(4\), 136-155.](#)
- **Before class:** Canvas assignment on the class material.
- **In-class activity:** Len-Ríos & Perry suggested activity on page 291-292

Unit 14: Conclusion

Class 28: Thursday, April 18

- **Content:**
 - Communication for the future
 - Discussion about final essays
- **Readings/materials:** None
- **Before class:** No assignment
- **In-class activity:** Student-led group activity #9 (disability)

Class 29: Tuesday, April 23

- **Content:** -
 - **Readings/materials:**
 - **Before class:** **Final short essay due**
 - **In-class activity:** MMC2604 Media Bingo! (extra credit)
-